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SUBJECT: NGO study highlights enormous  
destruction from GOZ'S Operation Murambatsvina  
and UN launches appeal.

REF: (a) Harare 1186  
(b) Harare 1307

1. (U) Summary: ActionAid International recently presented to the US Mission the findings of the first nationwide assessment of the impact of the Government of Zimbabwe's (GOZ) Operation Murambatsvina. Their staggering conclusions indicate that nearly 1.2 million people were directly affected and over US\$60 million in assets of some of the poorest people in Zimbabwe were destroyed. The recommendations of the report are consistent with those of the recently released UN appeal. Post supports the call to address the emergency humanitarian needs of the victims of this disastrous operation, but cautions that some of the UN's proposed activities are not appropriate to the emergency situation. End Summary.

2. (U) ActionAid International, a South African-based NGO formed in 1972 and now working in over 42 countries to assist the poor, recently completed the first nationwide study looking at the impact of the GOZ's Operation Murambatsvina (Restore Order, or Drive Out the Trash). ActionAid undertook this study in conjunction with several local NGO partners. The study was based on data collected from over 23,000 households in 66 different affected neighborhoods in 6 different urban centers. (Note: While ActionAid's study is the first comprehensive attempt to assess Operation Murambatsvina's impact, it is important to note that it is based on a non-random sample. The large sampling size provides useful information on general trends, but its "unscientific" methodology means that the findings cannot be conclusively extrapolated to a nationwide scale. End note.)

3. (U) Based on its research, ActionAid estimates that nearly 1.2 million people were directly affected by the GOZ's violent cleanup campaign. In July, the UN Special Envoy's report had estimated the number of people affected by the operation at 700,000 (Comment: Due to ActionAid's methodology, we suspect that its estimate of 1.2 million people affected is high, and that the UN's estimate is likely more accurate. End comment). Some highlights of ActionAid's findings are:

- - 70% of respondents lost their shelter;
- - 73% lost their primary source of income;
- - 22% of children dropped out of school, but
- - a further 44% of respondents reported that they were unlikely to be able to continue paying school fees for long;
- - 48% of households lost property (in addition to shelter);
- - 54% of households reported that they were now food insecure;
- - 38% of households reported separation/disruption of families, but
- - over 40% of households hosting orphans reported such disruptions;
- - 35% of households stated that women and children had become more vulnerable to abuse due to the operation;
- - 15% of households reportedly lost access to ARV treatment for AIDS.

14. (U) ActionAid estimates the value of the assets/property of the urban poor destroyed by Operation Murambatsvina at nearly US\$30 million, excluding Harare. (Note: The first phase of the study only covered Harare and did not include a question on the value of assets lost. A question to this effect was added only in the study's second phase, which covered five other urban centers. End Note.) Given Harare's large size compared to other urban centers in Zimbabwe, ActionAid estimates that if asset losses in Harare were included they would likely more than double the total loss of property to over US\$60 million.

15. (U) This week, the Ambassador toured some of the affected areas to assess the continuing impact of the damage. In Hatcliff, which used to be a vibrant community, he witnessed large numbers of people still left to sleep, eat and bathe out in the open. These people are completely exposed to the elements, with the rains expected to start in late October. The Ambassador talked to a young woman who started a pre-school on her own for over 20 children (many of them orphans) who no longer had access to school. In Mabvuku he talked to a dozen elderly women whose sole source of income (selling tomatoes) had been destroyed by the police multiple times, including as recently as a week ago.

16. (U) UN Appeal: Just last week the UN released its long-awaited "Common Response Plan for the needs of vulnerable persons affected by Operation Murambatsvina/Restore Order," requesting US\$29.8 million between now and December 2005. The appeal, released after protracted discussions with the GOZ but without GOZ concurrence, identifies approximately 300,000 people as the most vulnerable and in need of emergency assistance. Most of these people have lost their homes, their source of livelihood, or both. (Note: Donors have already responded to many of these immediate humanitarian needs, with the major donors, including the U.S., having provided approximately US\$6 million to date for emergency food, water, sanitation and household items. End note.) Proposed humanitarian interventions in this new appeal include:

- - provide temporary shelter and household items for up to 100,000 individuals (20,000 households) who are currently homeless, and advocate to the GOZ for the allocation of stands (lots) to those most vulnerable (US\$18,000,000 through UN-Habitat and IOM);
- - provide food and nutrition information to up to 200,000 people (US\$1,538,304 to UNICEF; WFP has available foodstocks);
- - protect vulnerable populations, focusing on children, women and girls (US\$1,150,000 to UNICEF, UNIFEM, RC/HC);
- - provide basic health services, including Child and Maternal Health, immunizations, and reproductive health (US\$2,181,000 to WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA);
- - meet HIV and AIDS prevention and treatment needs, including home-based care, referrals, VCT, behavior-change communications, and access to ART (US\$994,000 to UNAIDS, WHO, IOM, UNICEF);
- - provide access to adequate and safe water and sanitation (US\$1,306,100 to UNICEF);
- - provide access to quality education for 20,000 children (US\$653,000 to UNICEF);
- - develop an information, education, communication (IEC) program targeted at 20,000 households in nutrition, immunizations, water and sanitation, and life skills. (US\$248,000 to UNICEF);
- - expand facilities, including shelter, water, sanitation and health to Tongogara refugee camp for the additional 4,500 refugees (US\$600,000 to UNHCR);
- - develop a livelihoods recovery program for 100,000 individuals (US\$3,000,000 to UNDP); and
- - support to the office of the UN Humanitarian Coordinator/HST (US\$200,000 to UNHC).

17. (U) Donor views on UN Appeal: We have discussed the appeal with other major donors in country (i.e., British, Dutch, Swedes, Norwegians, Canadians), all of whom have views similar to ours. Donors recognize the urgent need to provide immediate humanitarian assistance to those households most at risk as a result of the operation. Donors stressed the importance of

limiting humanitarian assistance to the provision of temporary shelter, food, water, and sanitation, urging that it not extend to longer-term recovery activities in health, education and microfinance, which, as the responsibility of the GOZ, are not appropriate for a humanitarian appeal.

18. (U) Donor views on UN Appeal cont.: Consistent with our perspective, the major donors acknowledge that the provision of temporary shelter raises particular complications in the context of Operation Murambatsvina and the GOZ's own reconstruction program: Operation Garikai (reftel A). Shelter remains a serious humanitarian concern for approximately a hundred thousand people. The major donors, however, are unanimous in their insistence that donor-funded structures must be in the nature of temporary shelter, and must be provided within a framework that responds to the ongoing problems of delivering humanitarian assistance in Zimbabwe. First, given the GOZ's intentional and unnecessary destruction of houses, humanitarian support must not relieve pressure on the GOZ to live up to its responsibilities. Second, proposed temporary shelter interventions must be appropriate and in-line with internationally accepted standards. Third, in light of numerous credible allegations that the GOZ has used its patronage system to allocate stands under Operation Garikai to party supporters and state employees (including police), it is essential that any temporary shelter program have monitoring systems in place to assure donors that the process of beneficiary selection is fair and that all beneficiaries are actual, vulnerable victims of Operation Murambatsvina. Fourth, with the GOZ continuing to allege that some people are "illegally" occupying land, the donors also insist that the right of beneficiaries to remain on their lots must be clear. Finally, with recent problems both donors and NGOs have experienced gaining access to victims of Operation Murambatsvina, all donors emphasize the need for the GOZ to allow unhindered access to assess, respond to and monitor humanitarian needs.

19. (SBU) Comment: It is clear that the impact of Operation Murambatsvina will be with Zimbabwe for many, many years. While ActionAid's study is not a comprehensive analysis of the operation's impact (because it is based on self-reporting by respondents), it nonetheless paints a dreadful picture. Poverty in Zimbabwe was already deepening and expanding due to the country's rapid economic deterioration, but this wanton destruction of livelihoods and property only further exacerbates an already dire situation. Responding to the humanitarian needs of this population is going to be a tremendous challenge with the GOZ still not granting unimpeded access to the vulnerable and refusing to acknowledge the humanitarian consequences of its actions. The relatively high cost of temporary shelter solutions proposed by the UN must also be carefully reviewed. The good news is that the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, OCHA, has renewed interest in Zimbabwe and is taking steps to strengthen humanitarian coordination, information sharing and the overall response (reftel B). The recently issued UN appeal, if funded, will address many of the needs identified by ActionAid. The challenge will be how to respond effectively to emergency needs while maintaining accountability and pressure on the GOZ for their action.

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